

Remarks/Arguments

Claim Summary

By this Amendment, non-elected claims 1-5 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of their subject matter.

Further, by this Amendment, claim 6 has been revised, claim 9 has been cancelled, and new claim 15 has been added for the Examiner's consideration.

Support for new claim 15 can be found at paragraph [0175] of the specification.

Claims 6-8 and 10-15 are now pending in the application.

35 U.S.C. ¶103

Claims 6-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. ¶103 as being unpatentable over the alleged admitted prior art (APA) in view of Lee (US 6214751). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to the now-pending claims.

As acknowledged by the Examiner, the APA does not teach a post-cleaning step of supplying gas into the chamber without exciting the gas with RF power. As such, the Examiner relies on the teachings of Lee in this respect.

However, Lee is directed to a multi-step cleaning process in which various cleaning gases (namely, N₂O, CF₄) are supplied into the chamber. Attention is respectfully directed to TABLE 2 of Lee. As shown, the aforementioned cleaning gases are utilized in a cleaning step 2, and these same gases (as well as two N₂ purge steps) are selectively applied in subsequent steps 3-9.

In contrast, according to the presently claimed invention, the same process gas (e.g., TEOS gas) used in processing of the wafers is used in its unexcited state to reduce the prevailing temperature of the chamber after the cleaning process. Lee does not teach or suggest this aspect of the invention, and the combination of the APA and Lee does not teach or suggest this aspect of the invention.

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully contend that claims 6-8 and 10-15 define over the prior art.

Conclusion

No other issues remaining, reconsideration and favorable action upon the claims now pending in the application are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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